

In the Claims

Please amend the following claims:

B1 5uh
1. (Amended) A biodegradable nonwoven web having a permeability within the range of about 500 to about 1500 μm^2 and a void volume that is greater than about 25 cm^3/gram , wherein the web comprises a first biodegradable binder fiber that does not undergo severe heat shrinkage and a second biodegradable thermoplastic fiber; and

wherein the biodegradable nonwoven web is thermally bonded at a temperature less than 160°C, using convective heating, to achieve the permeability and the void volume.

2. (Amended) The nonwoven web of claim 1, wherein the first fiber is a multicomponent fiber comprising a surface component and a non-surface component.

3. (Amended) The nonwoven web of claim 2, wherein the surface component has a melting temperature at least about 10° C less than the melting temperature of the non-surface component.

4. (Amended) The nonwoven web of claim 3, wherein the second thermoplastic fiber has a melting temperature at least about 20° C higher than the melting temperature of the surface component of the multicomponent fiber.

B2
7. (Amended) The nonwoven web of claim 2, wherein the multicomponent fiber is a bicomponent sheath/core fiber.

Please add the following new claims:

B3 5uh
17. (New) The nonwoven web of claim 1, wherein the nonwoven web is thermally bonded at a temperature less than 150°C.

*Sub
C3
Control*

18. (New) The nonwoven web of claim 1, wherein the nonwoven web is thermally bonded at a temperature less than 145°C.

19. (New) The nonwoven web of claim 1, wherein the second biodegradable thermoplastic fiber does not melt.

*B3
Control*

20. (New) The nonwoven web of claim 2, wherein the nonwoven web is thermally bonded at a temperature 10 to 15°C above the melting temperature of the surface component.

*Sub
C3*

21. (New) The nonwoven web of claim 2, wherein the nonwoven web is thermally bonded at a temperature 5 to 10°C above the melting temperature of the surface component.

22. (New) The nonwoven web of claim 2, wherein the nonwoven web is thermally bonded at a temperature 2 to 5°C above the melting temperature of the surface component.

23. (New) The nonwoven web of claim 2, wherein the nonwoven web is thermally bonded at a temperature 2 to 5°C below the melting temperature of the surface component.